

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 7, 2004. Claims 1 to 58 are pending in the application, with Claims 57 and 58 having been added. Claims 1, 11, 22 to 26, 36, 47 and 56 to 58 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 1 to 46 are allowable.

Claims 47 to 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,628,417 (Naito). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention according to independent Claims 47 and 56 concerns controlling where image data is to be output based on forgery-preventing data. According to the invention, an image processing apparatus communicates with one or more image reading devices (e.g., scanners) and one or more image output devices (e.g., printers). The image processing apparatus receives forgery-preventing capability data from each of the reading devices and from each of the image output devices. That is, the image processing apparatus receives forgery-preventing information that indicates whether each of the image reading devices has a forgery-preventing capability, and whether each image output device has a forgery-preventing capability. When image data read by one of the image reading devices is received by the image processing apparatus, a judgment is made whether or not the image reading device that reads the image data includes a forgery-preventing capability. Then, based on the judgment result, the image processing apparatus controls where the received image data is to be output to in order to output the image data to an appropriate image output device. Thus, if the image reading device that reads the image data has the

forgery-preventing capability, the image data can be output to any of the output devices, regardless of whether or not they also have the forgery-preventing capability. However, if the image reading device that reads the image data does not have the forgery-preventing capability, then the output of the image data can be controlled so as to be output to one of the output devices that does have the forgery-preventing capability. As a result, forgery prevention can be readily assured since at least one of either the reading device or the output device will have the forgery-preventing capability.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended independent Claim 47 is an image processing apparatus that communicates with one or more image reading devices and one or more image output devices, comprising first receiving means that receives forgery-preventing capability data from each of the one or more image reading devices and each of the one or more image output devices, second receiving means that receives image data read by one of the one or more image reading devices, judging means that judges whether the image reading device that reads the image data includes a forgery-preventing capability or not from forgery-preventing capability data of the image reading device received by the first receiving means, and controlling means that controls where the image data received by the second receiving means is to be output to in order to output the image data to an appropriate image output device based on a judged result of the judging means and the forgery-preventing capability data of the image output device received by the first receiving means.

Amended independent Claim 56 is a method claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 47.

Newly-added independent Claim 57 includes features along the lines of Claims 47 and 56, but is more specifically directed to an image processing apparatus that

communicates with one or more image reading devices and one or more image output devices, comprising receiving means that receives image data read by the one or more image reading devices, and controlling means that outputs the image data received by the receiving means to an appropriate image output device based on information indicating whether or not the image reading device that reads the image data includes a forgery-preventing capability and forgery-preventing capability data of the image output devices.

Newly-added independent Claim 58 is a method claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 57.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claim 47 and 56 to 58. More particularly, with regard to Claims 47 and 56, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of judging whether an image reading device that reads received image data includes a forgery-preventing capability or not from received forgery-preventing capability data of one or more image reading devices, and controlling where the received image data is to be output to in order to output the image data to an appropriate image output device based on a judgment result and received forgery-preventing capability data of one or more image output devices. Similarly, with regard to Claims 57 and 58, the art of record is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of controlling output of received image data to an appropriate image output device based on information indicating whether or not an image reading device that reads the received image data includes a forgery-preventing capability and forgery-preventing capability data of one or more image output devices.

Naito merely discloses that, upon receiving a printing request from a client that includes a print size, a center server transfers a print order to an image server which saves high-resolution images. The image server processes the image to a designated size

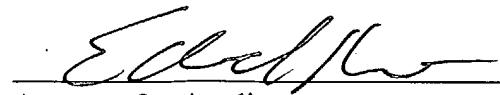
and sends the processed image back to the center server, which sends the received data to a print server to print the data. Each image server (111, 112, 11N) and print server (121, 122, 12N) may include a watermark reading/embedding function for reading/embedding digital watermarks in images. However, Applicant fails to see where Naito discloses or suggests judging whether an image reading device that reads received image data includes a forgery-preventing capability or not from received forgery-preventing capability data of one or more image reading devices, and controlling where the received image data is to be output to in order to output the image data to an appropriate image output device based on a judgment result and received forgery-preventing capability data of one or more image output devices (Claims 47 and 56). Likewise, Naito is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of controlling output of received image data to an appropriate image output device based on information indicating whether or not an image reading device that reads the received image data includes a forgery-preventing capability and forgery-preventing capability data of one or more image output devices (Claims 57 and 58).

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all of Claims 47 to 58, as well as Claims 1 to 46, are believed to be allowable. Accordingly, the entire application is believed to be in condition of allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

As a formal matter, Applicant notes that the Office Action did not include an indication acknowledging Applicant's claim to priority or receipt of the certified copy of the priority document. Therefore, Applicant requests that the Examiner provide such acknowledgment in the next communication.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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